



Windows to Wildlife



Volume 11

Number 3

Summer 2004



A Publication of the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee and Idaho's Nongame Program

In This Issue . . .

Hagerman Page 1

Protected Species List Altered... Page 3

West Nile Virus Page 4

Upper Salmon Lecture Series Page 4

Field Classes Page 5

Thank You Page 5

Project WILD Page 6

The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee is comprised of the following agencies and organizations:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Forest Service

Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation

Idaho Audubon Council

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Idaho Department of Commerce

Idaho Department of Transportation

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Hagerman Wildlife Management Area

Bird watching, hiking, and photography are just a few of the activities visitors can enjoy at the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in addition to hunting and fishing. Located 19 miles north of Buhl or four miles south of Hagerman on Highway 30, the WMA is a mecca for local wildlife and outdoor fun.

The Hagerman WMA was the first Wildlife Management Area designated in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game purchased 423 acres of land in 1940. Since then it has expanded to 880 acres. Today, the Hagerman WMA surrounds both the national and state fish hatcheries, with the balance of the property devoted to wildlife and their habitat.

The area is managed primarily for waterfowl habitat and as a wintering site for migrating birds. The spring-fed ponds stay ice-free during most winters, attracting as many as 55,000 ducks and 4,000 Canada geese. Riley Creek, irrigation canals, and 16 constructed ponds provide many opportunities for resting, feeding, and nesting wildlife. Habitat surrounding the riparian areas provide nesting habitat for waterfowl, grebes, herons, pheasants, valley quail, and gray partridge. The WMA is well known for upland birds and waterfowl, but is also home to muskrats, beavers, porcupines, marmots, and mule deer.

Birding

Hagerman Wildlife Management Area is listed as site number 54 in the 2003 Idaho Wildlife Viewing Guide, featured as one of the top areas to view wildlife. For the bird watcher, a visit to the WMA is a treat anytime of the year. Visitors can spot ducklings and goslings in the summer from mallards, gadwalls, cinnamon teal, wood ducks, and Canada geese. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game, with the help of Boy Scouts and volunteers, have also erected many goose nesting platforms and wood duck nesting boxes on the property to increase nesting opportunities.

More than 200 different species of birds visit the WMA throughout the year. Red-winged and yellow-headed blackbirds are very common in marsh areas. Visitors can also see a variety of shorebirds, 10 species of sparrows, five species of wrens, and five species

Photo above: Yellow-headed blackbird, Ken Retallic.

continued on next page

continued from page 1



Aerial view of Hagerman WMA, Gary C. Will

of swallows. Less common birds, but great to view, include: the greater white-fronted geese, Virginia rails, and bald eagles. A variety of owls and other raptors, especially osprey, also make their home at the WMA.

Hiking

For the adventurous visitor, Hagerman WMA offers a soft-surface walking trail just a short distance from the hatchery. The trails winding around Oster Lakes allow visitors to view waterfowl, songbirds, and many other wildlife species. A fire swept through the area a few years ago, burning many of the trees and shrubs. While hiking, one can see early growth of shrubs returning and trees re-sprouting. The southern-most Oster Lake trail provides a beautiful panoramic view of the Snake River, Gridley Island, and Hagerman Valley. Several trails opened July 1 for hiking in the northern part of the WMA (coincides with fishing season openers for the Anderson Ponds, Goose Pond and Bass



Osprey, Wayne Melquist

Pond). There are three miles of trails on the WMA, offering a wide-range of viewing opportunities.

Photography

The Hagerman WMA is a photographer's paradise. Shutterbugs can use the permanent blind, on the west shoreline of Riley Creek Pond, for photographing waterfowl or shorebirds wandering the edge of the pond. It offers a great opportunity for an "up close" look.

Photographers can also take pictures of bullfrogs, songbirds, flowers, cattails, ponds, waterfalls, raptors, and many other wildlife and their habitats. Keys to taking good photos include: using 100 or 200 ASA film (it will lessen the grain in the photos), take pictures early in the morning or late at night (the sun won't washout the colors in the subject) and use a telephoto lens (helps you get closer to the subject without disturbing them). A tripod or monopod can also help steady the camera.

Fish Hatchery

The Hagerman State Fish Hatchery is the largest resident fish hatchery in the state. It produces one million catchable (8 – 10") and 2-3 million fingerling (3 – 5") trout each year. Fish are raised for many bodies of water across the state. Fish from the facility are transported for release as far north as Lewiston and to both western and eastern borders. Hatchery employees primarily raise trout, steelhead, and Coho salmon. In the past, the hatchery has cultured largemouth bass, tiger muskie, sturgeon, and cutthroat trout.

Fishing

Hagerman WMA is well known for the Hagerman State Fish Hatchery and fishing. Annually, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game stocks more than 30,000 fish in the Oster Ponds. Thousands of anglers each season line their shores to catch trout, bass, and bluegill. Wheelchair accessible areas can also be found at Oster Pond #1, and at Riley Creek Pond. Check the fishing regulations as opening dates and regulations vary from area to area.



Happy boy with a whopper of a Rainbow Trout, IDFG



With so many different opportunities available at the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area, there is something for everyone in the family to enjoy. So head out the door, to the outdoors, and visit this wildlife area. For more information on the Hagerman WMA, call 208/324-4359.

Green-winged teal, Gary C. Will

Protected Species List Altered

All of Idaho's bats, reptiles, amphibians and a few ground squirrels have been listed as protected nongame species with the approval of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission. The Commission acted at the March 2004

meeting to alter the list of species protected in Idaho by the Department of Fish and Game. Protected nongame status means that people cannot kill or possess these species except as provided in Idaho code and by Commission regulations.

"Idaho demographics are changing, and more citizens expect Fish and Game to expend time and resources protecting and conserving nongame wildlife and their habitats in addition to our traditional role of managing species for hunters and anglers," said Nongame program manager Chuck Harris. He noted that Idaho law will continue to allow the killing of bats, rattlesnakes, or other protected nongame species when personal health, safety, or property is at issue. Killing a rattlesnake in the backyard or a bat that flies into your house will not bring a visit from the local conservation officer.

For bats the primary interest is in protecting hibernating, maternity, and critical roosting sites. Large numbers of bats can be vulnerable within their colonized groups. Bats are beneficial as predators of mosquitoes and night flying insects that can transmit diseases such as West Nile virus as well as damage agricultural crops and forests.

The new rules still allow Idahoans to collect and keep up to four live native reptiles or amphibians. A valid hunting, trapping, or combination hunting and fishing license is required before collecting. Children under age 10 do not need a license. Harris

said reasons for making the changes include protecting reptiles and amphibians on a legal basis comparable to surrounding states'. Common sense was another reason. Under the old rules a person could collect and possess only four

live native reptiles or amphibian, but they could kill as many as they wanted because they were classified as unprotected wildlife.

The list of protected ground squirrel species grew due to the rarity of two and the undetermined status of another. Merriam's ground squirrel is a subspecies found in Owyhee County south of Snake River, west of Reynolds Creek, and north of Cow Creek. The core of this species' range is in Oregon, but it is in decline there as well. The Wyoming ground squirrel is a subspecies found in southern Owyhee and Twin Falls counties along Idaho-Nevada border. Rock squirrels, which resemble a large gray tree squirrel, are very rare in Idaho. Southeast Idaho is the northern extent of its range. Rock squirrels are found in southeast Idaho in Oneida, Franklin, and Bear Lake counties in rocky, arid habitats such as canyons, cliffs, and talus slopes. Little information exists on the current status of the Piute ground squirrel subspecies found in the Snake River Plain north of the Snake River from Bliss to Dubois. Surveys conducted in 2000 found it at only four of 24 historical sites. All of these ground squirrels live in shrub-steppe habitats where other species such as sage grouse and pygmy rabbits have also been experiencing similar population declines.

The new rules will unlikely change most Idahoan's enjoyment of wildlife, but the new rules will help Fish and Game to protect and conserve nongame wildlife and their habitats.



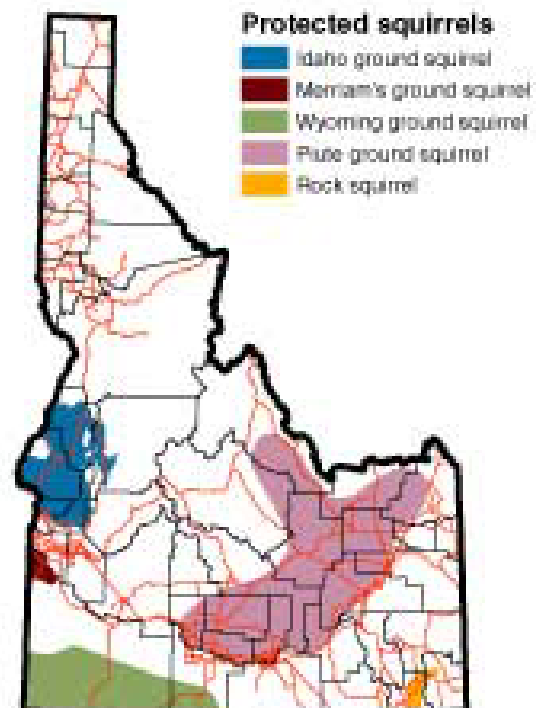
Townsend's Big Eared Bat Colony, IDFG



Side-blotched Lizard, Gary C. Will



Chorus Frog, IDFG



West Nile Virus update

Summer is here, and state agencies are preparing Idaho residents for the arrival of West Nile virus. Since West Nile virus was first discovered in New York in 1999, it has spread rapidly across the country. Idaho nearly avoided the virus in 2003, but in November, West Nile virus was found in juvenile alligators shipped to a commercial fish farm in the Hagerman valley. Workers at the farm were tested and one man tested positive, making him the first person to acquire West Nile virus within Idaho's borders. State agencies have stepped up surveillance for West Nile virus this year. Idaho's first West Nile case in 2004 was confirmed in a horse in Canyon County in June.

Disease experts say the presence of West Nile virus is no reason to stop enjoying the outdoors. Only a fraction of the mosquito population would carry the virus and only a few people who get bitten and infected get sick. However, officials do encourage people to protect themselves from mosquitoes.

You Can . . . Fight the Bite

Simple tips for avoiding mosquito bites:

- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to your exposed skin and clothing. Follow instructions on the product label, especially for children under 12 years.
- Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Eliminate standing water around your home that may provide mosquitoes a place to breed.
- Empty birdbaths and clean decorative ponds every 3 to 6 days.
- Repair or install screens on your home.
- If you have a horse, vaccinate it. One-third of horses infected by West Nile virus die.
- Hunters should wear latex gloves when field dressing and handling wild game. Cook meat thoroughly.
- Report dead corvids (crow and ravens) and raptors (hawks, eagles, and owls) to your local District Health Department or Fish and Game office.



Upper Salmon Basin

NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES

Speakers will present information to increase public awareness and appreciation of the native plants and animals and natural wonders of the Upper Salmon Basin. Lectures are free and open to the public.



Saw-whet owl, IDFG

July 7, Whitebark Pine: A Keystone Species of the Intermountain West, by Dr. Dana Perkins - BLM Ecologist, Land of the Yankee Fork Interpretive Center - 7:00 pm at the junction of U.S. 93 and State Hwy. 75 in Challis

July 15, Gold in the Hills: The Ecology and Management of Quaking Aspen, by Jennifer Purvine - U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, Land of the Yankee Fork Interpretive Center - 7:00 pm

July 20, Seasonal Movements of Bull Trout, Cutthroat Trout, and Rainbow Trout in the Upper Salmon, by Greg Schoby - Idaho State University Graduate Student/ Fisheries Technician, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game, Salmon City Center, 200 Main Street - 7:00 pm

July 23, The Mountain Goats of Central Idaho, by Dr. Tom Keegan - Wildlife Manager, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game, Redfish Lake Visitor Center - 7:00 pm, about 4.5 miles south of Stanley, off State Hwy. 75

August 3, Rocks, Minerals, and Abandoned Mines of the Lemhi Country, by Dennis Krasowski - BLM Geologist, Salmon City Center, 200 Main Street - 7:00 pm

For more information, please contact Beth Waterbury at 208/756-2271, bwaterbury@idfg.state.id.us



Mountain goats, Gary C. Will

THANK YOU

Thank You to All Contributors

Our sincere thanks go to all supporters of the Nongame Program, financially or otherwise. Without your contributions, the Nongame Program could not conduct critical research, hold wildlife viewing events, or publish this newsletter. The following people made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of their tax checkoff donation. These lists represent only newsletter subscribers who have returned a subscription form between March 1–May 31, 2004, and marked the contributor box. Many subscribers not listed here have contributed generously and Idaho's nongame wildlife thanks all of you.

Plate purchase

Walter & Susanne Akers
Armour Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Ausburn
Steve Austin
Jeff Beekman
Debbie Bergquam
Matt Berrett
Dan & Dayna Buckley
Richard & Marjorie Carrow
Sharon Chaloupka
Lyle Chandler
William Cody
Charles & Charlate Cram
Matthew Curtis
Gene de Reus
Engineered Demolition
Christine & Brian Edminston
Shirley Enyeart

Andrew Fanning
Craig Fowler
Becky Franklin
Lloyd & Jeanine Gardner
Lucy Halpin
Celeste Hanlin
Paul & Erin Hannah
Cliff & Darlene Heard
Dana & Shannon Herbert
Melvin & Sheri Hughes
Gaylon Johnson
Eileen Kelso
Kelly & Debbie Klempel
Bernie & Ann Knapp
Rod Layton
Ken & Sandy Leight
Lawrie Malay
Shane Meeker
Ellen McKenzie

Alan Morphey
David & Mimi Rice
Anissa Rooney
Cal Rowe
Robert & Joyce Ruesink
Dick and Donna Sagness
Steve & Andie Scarone
Trudy Sheetz
Warren Shillington
Gerry Simmons
Thomas Lee Siwecki II
Richard Smart
Donna & Franklin Smith
B.J. Sprague
William & Joan Webb
Nancy Weiser
Sheran Williams
Wolf Lodge Creek Bed &
Breakfast (Neva Lindsey)

Tax Checkoff

Trish Heekin
Alan Morphey
Robert & Joyce Ruesink
Trudy Sheetz
Fred & Melly Zeillemaker

Donations

\$5-25
Shirley Bunton
Shirley Enyeart
Marilyn Lawley
Rep. George Saylor
Donna & Franklin Smith

\$30-50
Virgel Clark
Trudy Sheetz
Fumiko Tanaka
Irene Victory

Field Classes

The Sawtooth Science Institute will hold workshops and field classes on many outdoor studies. No previous experience is required. Several workshops require considerable hiking though. For fee information and registration, view <http://imnh.isu.edu/ssi>, or contact Chris Gertschen at 208/788-9686; cgertschen@velocitus.net.

- July 9-10 High Desert Plants
- July 13-16 Experiencing Lewis and Clark Trail
- July 13-14 Idaho Plants and Butterflies
- July 15-16 Idaho's Mammals: Large and Small
- July 22-23 Henry's Fork Birding on the Water
- July 27-30 Central Idaho Mining History
- Aug 3-4 Rocks and Ice: Central Idaho Geology
- Aug 17-20 Lewis & Clark Discovery
- Aug 27-28 Craters of the Moon Natural History

Renew Your Newsletter Subscription . . .

To update your subscription, fill out this form and send to:

Windows to Wildlife

Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
P. O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707-0025



- ☐ Please add me to mailing list* or
☐ renew my subscription,* based on
- ☐ \$_____ Donation enclosed. Make check payable to "Windows to Wildlife"
 - ☐ Trout plate purchase or renewal,
 - ☐ Elk plate purchase or renewal,
 - ☐ Bluebird plate purchase or renewal,
 - ☐ Nongame tax checkoff donation (state income tax),
 - ☐ Other nongame donation _____
- ☐ Send my newsletter by e-mail. (address) _____
- ☐ Please list my name as a contributor in the next newsletter (You won't be listed in the next newsletter if you don't check this box.)
- ☐ Remove my name from mailing list. ☐ Change my address.

* Subscription to **Windows to Wildlife** is free if you have contributed to the Nongame Program by a wildlife license plate purchase, nongame tax donation, or cash donation. Please indicate.

Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State/Zip Code _____



Looking for a WILD time this summer?

Idaho Department of Fish and Game is offering a week long workshop at two different locations, July 11 – 17, 2004. These workshops are set up for teachers, scout leaders, and anyone who works with kids from grades K – 12. Participants learn how to integrate wildlife education into their programs or children's lives. At the advanced workshops, teachers come face to face with wildlife and habitat. Several species are focused on during the workshops and you could find yourself crawling in a bear den, netting a salmon, or observing moose close up!

Beautiful Payette Lake in McCall, Idaho and Harriman State Park, near Yellowstone are the locations of these fantastic workshops. Workshops can be taken for \$260 (\$395 including university credits). These prices include incredible food, lodging, and numerous freebies. Hurry and register, there are not many spots left!

For more information and registration, contact Lori Adams at Fish and Game, 208/287-2889, ladams@idfg.state.id.us, http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/education/project_wild



Teacher crawling out of a bear den, IDFG



The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee and Nongame Program grant permission to reprint uncopyrighted text, not artwork, provided **Windows to Wildlife** is credited.

recycled  paper

Windows to Wildlife
is a quarterly publication of
the Idaho Watchable
Wildlife Committee and
Nongame Program.
Aimee Pope
Editor
Alyssa Faaborg
Designer
To submit an article,
obtain a subscription,
renew a subscription,
or notify us of address
change, contact the Editor
at the above address.
apope@idfg.state.id.us
208/334-2920

Forwarding Service Requested

Windows to Wildlife
NONGAME PROGRAM
PO BOX 25
BOISE ID 83707-0025

PRSRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Boise, Idaho 83707
Permit No. 408